

Andersen's Amphibious Responders

Twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, Air Force firefighters are ready, willing and able to respond to a wide range of emergencies. Already known worldwide as experts in aircraft crash and fire rescue, they quickly adapt to the special needs of each installation. Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, is no exception. Located on a small island in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, it is the only base in the Air Force that has a water rescue team.

Military members on the island partake of a variety of water sports that offer discovery, excitement and danger. That is where the men and women of the 36th Civil Engineer Squadron Fire Protection Flight play a critical role.

Each shift, firefighters are designated as members of the water rescue team. This one-of-a-kind capability has been used several times to rescue swimmers off the northern tip of the island. Having two jet skis and extractor boards staged at the water's edge, it doesn't take long for them to spring into action. Two, two-person firefighter teams ride the rescue skis and a fifth firefighter serves as a safety officer during all operations. A senior fire officer coordinates rescue operations from shore with other responding agencies such as the Coast Guard, a naval helicopter assigned to Andersen's Helicopter Combat Support Squadron FIVE (HC-5), security forces and medical personnel.

"It's exciting and kind of scary at the same time," said A1C Patrick Stanfield, a water rescue team member. "Both shifts practice at least once a month to ensure we are ready and to qualify new team members."

"The concept of using jet skis came about several years ago when swimmers were out beyond the reef. At the time all we could do was throw life preservers to them. Now we go get them in a safe and coordinated manner," said Marvin Tuncap, one of the rescue team instructors.

Special emphasis is placed on pilot training so the jet skis are



Joey Tajalle and Philip Guerrero, 36th CES Fire Protection Flight, simulate rescuing a swimmer at a local beach. Andersen AFB's water rescue team trains throughout the year on water rescue techniques. (Photo by SSgt Crispin Pacificar)

operated safely in protected and open water. Rescuers ride to the victim on the back of the jet ski and slide back onto the extractor board. Approaching from the right, the pilot deftly reaches out and grabs the victim, transferring him or her to the rescuer on the extractor board. Cradled in protective arms, the victim is swiftly taken to shore for medical attention.

"During the hours of darkness, HC-5 can illuminate our route through the reef and guide us to the victims, which really helps," said Tuncap. "It's never a good idea to get out beyond the reef, but if you do get caught out there the water rescue team at Andersen AFB is ready to help."

In addition to having access to clear water teeming with aquatic life, much of the island is covered with thick vegetation known as "boonies." In the dry season, from April to August, the boonies can readily burn, placing U.S. assets and private property at risk. Due to the thickness of the boonies and the rough terrain, getting firefighters into position to control and extinguish these fires can be nearly impossible.

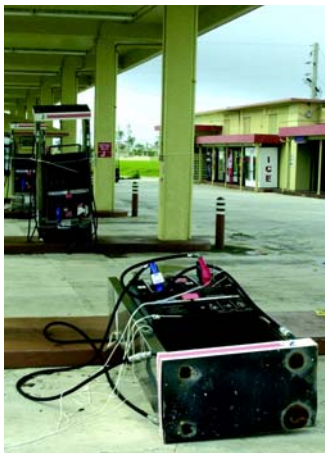
Last year, when a fire threatened an off-base radar site, firefighters requested the assistance of HC-5 to airdrop water onto the fire. The CH-46 is capable of lifting a bucket

with 500 gallons of water and dropping it precisely where the senior fire officer needs it. Efforts are currently underway to improve communications, determine pre-approved fill points to minimize the impact on the flying mission, and develop a comprehensive training program. HC-5 has been in the business of airborne firefighting for years and trains regularly to conduct these types of operations.

MSgt Marshall Hadley, Assistant Chief for Fire Prevention, got to see first-hand the capabilities of the helicopter and bucket. "It's amazing to see the helicopter fill the bucket and drop that amount of water so accurately. Having this capability available will surely help us combat wildland fires more efficiently in the future." During last year's dry season it wasn't uncommon to have a firefighter spend at least some of his or her 24-hour shift combating wildland fires.

This dual role of firefighter and water rescuer is what sets the fire protection flight at Andersen apart from those on other Air Force bases. In the jungle or in the water, Andersen AFB firefighters operate in extremes. (SMSgt Mark Ledford, 36th Civil Engineer Squadron, Andersen AFB, Guam)

CE Teams Aid Andersen Typhoon Recovery



Andersen AFB's gas station was one of several agencies crippled by the effects of Typhoon Chata'an on Guam in July. (Photo by A1C Joshua Strang)

Twenty members of the 15th Civil Engineer Squadron from Hickam Air Force Base, HI, and six members of the 3rd CES from Elmendorf AFB, AK, arrived in Guam July 12 with generators, ice machines and supplies to boost Andersen AFB's ability to return to normal operations in the wake of Typhoon Chata'an, which struck there July 5.

The Hickam and Elmendorf civil engineers were in Guam to augment Andersen's 36th CES. "They expanded our work force, and we've been able to get more done in the same amount of time," said Lt Col Bruce Arnold, 36th CES commander. "This is a total team effort — one team all the way."

The deployed CEs brought extra equipment and supplies, such as eight additional generators, seven portable air conditioning units, 10 ice machines and electrical wire.

Two personnel from Headquarters Pacific Air Forces at Hickam

and one from the Civil Engineer Maintenance Inspection and Repair Team (CEMIRT) at Travis AFB, CA, traveled to Guam to help, as well.

"There is a lot of interest in this from Headquarters PACAF and beyond," said Stan Wakumoto, a PACAF electrical engineer. "The base has so many things to do already they can't be distracted. I'm glad we are here and are helping."

The typhoon hit the island with winds of more than 100 miles per hour, knocking out power across the island and damaging various buildings, including some at Andersen. A second typhoon, Halong, with winds of up to 212 miles per hour, barely missed Guam July 10, skirting just past the island.

"The first and foremost thing was we wanted to make sure all family dwellings were up on power," said MSgt Jeffrey May, 36th CES electrical systems superintendent.

The electricians' work began to pay off when base housing experienced the beginning of restored power July 12. Though they were closer to the goal, the electricians noticed a problem: the phase was wrong, causing the sewage lift station pumps in housing to run backward. The electricians fixed the phase problem and restored power the next day, but had to deal with another phase problem that caused an un-

scheduled temporary outage July 15.

Transformers around base were damaged by typhoon winds, and several switch boxes in housing shorted out from the increased moisture — moisture that later penetrated the base's substation and started a fire. As quickly and safely as they could, said Sergeant May, they bypassed the switches. Then with part of the substation out of commission, electricians rerouted the electrical feed through the industrial portions of the base, then back to tie feeders into the housing areas.

"That really made it difficult just to get power back over to the housing area," said Sergeant May. "We've kind of re-configured our circuits to accommodate the living quarters on base."

With housing power restored, Andersen's 24 electricians were able to slow down to 12-hour shifts. And while the housing electricity was difficult to fix, Sergeant May said the biggest hurdle was yet to come.

"Our biggest challenge will be when the power does come back [completely]," he said. "The typhoon placed a lot of stress on wires, connections and circuits around the base, and when power returns, these stresses will become more evident." (Compiled from Pacific Air Forces News stories)



A-Grams Go Electronic

Effective April 1, 2002, AFCEA converted to publishing A-Grams in electronic format only. They are available on the AFCEA public website at <http://www.afcesa.af.mil> under Library/Publications. Below is a list of A-Grams that have been published since the effective date.

- Industrial Water Treatment CD-ROM
- Computer-Based Training Course—Civil Engineer Material Acquisition System (CEMAS)
- Air Force Qualification Training Package (AFQTP)—M-272 Water Testing Kit, Chemical Agents 3E4X1 and 3E9X1
- USAF CONUS Response Task Force (RTF) Video Pin # 614118
- Automated Civil Engineer System—Fire Department (ACES-FD)
- Air Force Qualification Training Package (AFQTP)—Revetments, Version 2, 3E3X1, 3E2X1, 3E5X1
- Backflow Prevention For Fire Protection Systems
- Hazardous Materials (HAZMAT) Incident Commander Interactive Multimedia Course
- First Aid/First Responder Multimedia Training Course
- CE Readiness and Exercise Evaluation Team Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) Training Kit
- Air Force Water Conservation Guidebook
- The Unified Facility Criteria (UFC) Program
- Air Force Qualification Training Package (AFQTP) Remote Area Lighting System (RALS)
- Defense Logistics Agency Maintenance, Repair, And Operations (MRO) Services Program